

The Strategy Selection Grid

This is a useful tool when you are in the very early stages of strategy development.

It helps you look at possible alternatives related to the three primary strategic variables:

- Target Group Selection (Customer)
- Product Class Definition (Competitive Set)
- Message Emphasis (Product)

Then, to help with the evaluation of alternatives...

- Rationale

This grid allows you to lay out the alternatives in an easy-to-understand way. It can also help you become familiar with the basic elements of strategic development.

SELDOM USED IN AD AGENCIES.

During a fairly lengthy agency career, with a lot of strategy development, we never used anything like this – for a very simple reason.

In the agency environment, client marketing organizations are usually pretty clear about Target Group Selection and Product Class Definition. Perhaps there would be some fine-tuning in the Target Group area, but, again, by the time the brand shows up at the agency, the basics are pretty well worked out.

Situations Where the Grid Is Helpful.

In new ventures, whether a new brand, a new store, or a special event on campus, this grid can be very clarifying.

Helpful Hint: You don't have to generate alternatives in every category. Product class or target group may be fairly clear.

Strategy Selection Grid:				
Product Class Definition				
Target Group Selection				
Message Element Selection				
Rationale – based on information and/or judgement				




THE BEETHOVEN SWEATSHIRT. Remember Gossage and “5000 acres of hollyhocks”?


Here, Gossage had to find a connection between classical music and Rainier Ale.

[Rainier Ale Strikes a Blow for Culture • Public Service Advertisement]


BE THE FIRST HIGHBROW IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO OWN A BEETHOVEN, BRAHMS, OR BACH SWEATSHIRT



BEETHOVEN



BRAHMS



J. S. BACH

In accordance with our policy of bringing culture to the masses, Rainier Ale sponsors an exciting program where anyone can own a fine Beethoven, Brahms or Bach sweatshirt. The price is a mere \$49.95. This is not an advertisement, it is only an invitation for you to own a sweatshirt compared to the pleasure of great culture. Beethoven, Brahms or Bach is guaranteed to give you a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride in your neighborhood. It is a symbol of a great culture.

There are 27 "highbrow" and two large ones only, men and women. They are available in every size and color. The price is a mere \$49.95. This is not an advertisement, it is only an invitation for you to own a sweatshirt compared to the pleasure of great culture. Beethoven, Brahms or Bach is guaranteed to give you a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride in your neighborhood. It is a symbol of a great culture.

These are 27 "highbrow" and two large ones only, men and women. They are available in every size and color. The price is a mere \$49.95. This is not an advertisement, it is only an invitation for you to own a sweatshirt compared to the pleasure of great culture. Beethoven, Brahms or Bach is guaranteed to give you a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride in your neighborhood. It is a symbol of a great culture.

THREE BY SWEATSHIRT COUPON

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

In addition to this ad, there were commercials on the classical music station.

Sometimes accepting one somewhat unusual fact – and then being very logical based on an illogical premise – can have a pretty interesting result.

As an exercise, you might try to take some fairly distant idea – say a violin and the back seat of a car – and figure out how to connect them.

Now a violinist (or maybe two) demonstrates that there is enough room to play in the back seat of the car – demonstrating roominess in an entertaining and memorable way.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS ON USING “THE GRID.” As mentioned, this is not used much in agencies, since “Product Class Definition” and “Target Group Selection” are already pretty well worked out.

But you may very well find yourself dealing with these issues when you’re dealing with new businesses, high-tech start-ups, or clients without a clue.

A few things to think about.

- **More Than One Strategy.** Remember, a strategy is an hypothesis – a best guess. You may very well have more than one.

At the same time, your business may have more than one operational strategy.

For example, some restaurants also operate a catering service. Others do take-out and delivery. Seems simple, but the communication strategies for these “products” are a bit different.

- **“What if” exercises.** Sometimes, taking a counter-intuitive point of view, i.e. “let’s sell hockey tickets to women” or “let’s sell Rainier Ale to people who listen to classical music” can have interesting results. For Rainier Ale, the Beethoven sweatshirt – also available in Bach and Brahms.

- **“Drilling Down.”** When you have a complex, multi-faceted problem, the Grid can help you identify all the different aspects on a grid-like playing field and start to make some decisions. Some things will start to connect. For example, a connection between Product Class and Target Group. Then, the preferred Message Element often emerges.

Bonus: There’s a bit more in PowerPoint on our AdBuzz website. We have a collection of these materials in the section labeled CAFÉ.